

Decision Memo
Forest Plan Amendment No. 3.
Umpqua National Forest
Lane, Douglas and Jackson Counties, Oregon

Purpose and Need

The purpose of Amendment No. 3 to the Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) is to provide options for creating or maintaining multi-storied stands by retention of green trees in harvest units. The Interagency Scientific Committee's Conservation Strategy for the Northern Spotted Owl and the USDI Draft Spotted Owl Recovery Plan have both recommended reduced reliance on the clearcut harvest method with varying degrees of multi-story management into the next rotation period. Recent policy statements on ecosystem management have emphasized the need for adaptive management strategies to maintain the diversity and long-term productivity of the National Forests. In addition, recent direction from the Chief of the Forest Service mandated a reduction in clearcutting on the National Forests. Green tree retention that maintains the option of creating multi-storied stands beyond regeneration harvest may contribute to all of these ends.

An amendment to the LRMP is needed to provide flexibility to be responsive to the Chief's policy on clearcutting, the recommendations of the ISC Report, the recommendations of the draft USDI Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, and policy statements on ecosystem management. Portions of Chapter IV of the LRMP are amended by this Decision Memo to provide this flexibility. These amended provisions are applicable to timber management activities during the first decade of LRMP implementation.

Proposed Action

Changes in Chapter IV are as follows:

1. Desired Future Condition

Add to page IV-5, Paragraph 3, last sentence: **The Forest in 10 years may have green trees retained in harvest units contributing to a multi-storied appearance.**

2. Timber and Vegetation Management, Standard and Guideline #11

On page IV-46, beginning with the second sentence, second paragraph, change to read as follows: **Even aged management with harvest by shelterwood, seed tree and clearcut methods will be the most commonly used systems. The use of clearcutting must be consistent with the criteria of the Chief's policy (attached). Green merchantable trees may be retained to maintain the option of creating multi-storied stands. This does not preclude harvest of these trees in the future.**

3. **Allowable Sale Quantity and Long-Term Sustained Yield**

On page IV-53, at the end of the first paragraph add the sentence: **The effect of green tree retention on ASQ and LTSY will be determined through monitoring of implementation.**

4. **Allowable Sale Quantity and Long-Term Sustained Yield**

On Page IV-56, change the second paragraph, second sentence to read: **When reforestation is complete, shelterwood trees may or may not be harvested in this Plan period, depending on stand structure objectives.**

5. **Timber and Vegetation Management, Resource Prescription C4-1 and C4-2.** On page IV-195 and IV-197, under Timber, add the following sentence at the end of the second paragraph: **Retention of green trees beyond regeneration harvest must be weighed against forage objectives.**

Rational for Implementation of the Proposed Action

This decision provides responsible officials the flexibility to retain green trees in harvest units beyond regeneration harvest. This maintains the option of creating multistoried stands in the future. It does not foreclose the option to remove these trees if removal is consistent with future stand structure objectives. Green tree retention is consistent with the Chief's policy to reduce clearcutting, the recommendations of the ISC Report, the USDI Draft Recovery Plan for the Northern Spotted Owl and policy statements concerning ecosystem management. The effect of retaining green trees on ASQ will be determined by monitoring of implementation. There are no immediate effects on ASQ projected for the first decade of the Forest Plan. There may be effects on subsequent decade ASQ and LTSY. The range of possible effects on ASQ and LTSY is estimated to be between 0% and 10%. Environmental effects of management during the first decade of LRMP implementation are expected to remain the same.

Scoping and Public Involvement

The need for this amendment was raised by several District project planning teams, resource specialists and line officers on the Umpqua National Forest. The Forest Supervisor directed the Forest Interdisciplinary Planning Team (ID Team) to scope this issue and identify changes needed in the LRMP to provide the flexibility to retain green trees beyond regeneration harvest for the purpose of creating multi-storied stands. After the ID team reviewed the issue and the proposed action, meetings were conducted with interested publics to develop this amendment. Verbal and written responses were invited from those parties. The principle comments from reviewers, both in and outside of the Forest Service were:

1. Provide implementation guidelines for District level project planning teams that describe stand structure objectives.
2. Provide numerical guidelines for stand structure goals.

Some respondents felt no additional guidelines for implementation were needed. One respondent noted it appeared to be good direction for the Forest.

Relationship to NFMA and Evaluation of Significance

After an interdisciplinary review of the Proposed Action, I have determined that this amendment is non significant since it will not alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management. Adoption of this amendment will not significantly change the Forest-wide environmental impacts disclosed in the Umpqua National Forest Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Reasons for Categorically excluding the Proposed Action

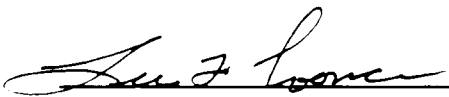
Implementation is consistent with Category 1, Chapter 26.2, FSH 1909.15-91-1. In addition, this Decision has no more impact than other activities that are typically considered in a Categorical Exclusion (FSM 1952.2). Therefore, this amendment is categorically excluded from further documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment (FSM 1952.2 and FSH 1909.15-91-1). I find that no extraordinary circumstances exist concerning these changes.

Implementation and Appeal

Implementation of this decision shall not occur within 7 days following publication of the legal notice of the decision in the Roseburg News Review.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Any written Notice of Appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of Notice of Appeal) and must include the reasons for appeal. A written Notice of Appeal, in duplicate, must be filed with the Reviewing Officer, John Lowe, Regional Forester, Pacific Northwest Region, 333 SW First St., PO Box 3623, Portland, Oregon, 97208, within 45 days of the date the legal notice of this decision appears in the Roseburg News Review.

For further information, contact Doyle Ward, Umpqua National Forest, P.O. Box 1008, Roseburg, Oregon 97470.



LEE F. COONCE
Forest Supervisor
Umpqua National Forest

8/10/92

Date

Chief's Clearcutting Policy

The objective of this new provision is to reduce clearcutting on National Forest System lands and make greater use of individual tree selection, group selection, green tree retention, shelterwood, seed tree and other regeneration cutting methods with collectively provide for a more visually pleasing and diverse vegetative appearance on a Forest-wide basis.

This policy would reduce clearcutting where it has been used as a standard timber harvest practice on the National Forests. Clearcutting would be limited to areas where it is essential to meet Forest Plan objectives and involve one or more of the following circumstances:

1. To establish, enhance or maintain habitat for threatened, endangered or sensitive species.
2. To enhance wildlife habitat or water yield values, or to provide for recreation, scenic vistas, utility lines, road corridors, facility sites, reservoirs or similar development.
3. To rehabilitate lands adversely impacted by events such as fires, windstorms, or insect or disease infestations.
4. To preclude or minimize the occurrence of potentially adverse impacts or insect or disease infestation, windthrow, logging damage, or other factors affecting forest health.
5. To provide for the establishment and growth of desired trees or other vegetative species that are shade intolerant.
6. To rehabilitate poorly stocked stands due to past management practices or natural events.
7. To meet research needs.